

The Honorable Ricardo S. Martinez

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

SARAH ALLEN,

Plaintiff,

v.

CHRISTINE E. WORMUTH, Secretary of the
Army,

Defendant.

Case No. 2:22-cv-00782-RSM

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

Noted for Consideration:

November 2, 2022

1. PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection may be warranted. The government anticipates that documents pertaining to individuals in a “system of records,” as defined by the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a(a)(5) (the “Privacy Act”), disclosure of which would potentially constitute a violation of criminal and civil law under § 552a(b) of the Privacy Act, absent an Order from this Court pursuant to § 552a(b)(11) of the Privacy Act, may need to be released and/or disclosed in discovery for the purpose of litigating this case. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this agreement is consistent with LCR 26(c). It does not confer blanket protection on all disclosures or responses to discovery, the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment under

1 the applicable legal principles, and it does not presumptively entitle parties to file confidential
2 information under seal.

3 2. “CONFIDENTIAL” MATERIAL

4 “Confidential” material shall include the following documents and tangible things
5 produced or otherwise exchanged:

- 6 • Any person’s financial records, including tax records;
- 7 • Medical records and medical information;
- 8 • Personnel and employment-related records of any current or former government
9 employee;
- 10 • Documents related to any other current or former government employee’s
11 protected activity; and
- 12 • Any other records whose release without a protective order would potentially
13 violate the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a.

14 3. SCOPE

15 The protections conferred by this agreement cover not only confidential material (as
16 defined above), but also (1) any information copied or extracted from confidential material; (2)
17 all copies, excerpts, summaries, or compilations of confidential material; and (3) any testimony,
18 conversations, or presentations by parties or their counsel that might reveal confidential material.

19 However, the protections conferred by this agreement do not cover information that is in
20 the public domain or becomes part of the public domain through trial or otherwise.

21 4. ACCESS TO AND USE OF CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

22 4.1 Basic Principles. A receiving party may use confidential material that is disclosed
23 or produced by another party or by a non-party in connection with this case only for prosecuting,
24 defending, or attempting to settle this litigation. Confidential material may be disclosed only to
25 the categories of persons and under the conditions described in this agreement. Confidential
26 material must be stored and maintained by a receiving party at a location and in a secure manner
27 that ensures that access is limited to the persons authorized under this agreement.

1 4.2 Disclosure of “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items. Unless otherwise
2 ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the designating party, a receiving party may
3 disclose any confidential material only to:

4 (a) the receiving party’s counsel of record in this action, as well as employees
5 of counsel to whom it is reasonably necessary to disclose the information for this litigation;

6 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including in house counsel) of the
7 receiving party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this litigation, unless the parties
8 agree that a particular document or material produced is for Attorney’s Eyes Only and is so
9 designated;

10 (c) experts and consultants to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for
11 this litigation and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit
12 A);

13 (d) the court, court personnel, and court reporters and their staff;

14 (e) copy or imaging services retained by counsel to assist in the duplication
15 of confidential material, provided that counsel for the party retaining the copy or imaging service
16 instructs the service not to disclose any confidential material to third parties and to immediately
17 return all originals and copies of any confidential material;

18 (f) during their depositions, witnesses in the action to whom disclosure is
19 reasonably necessary and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound”
20 (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the designating party or ordered by the court. Pages of
21 transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal confidential material must
22 be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted
23 under this agreement;

24 (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a
25 custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information.

26 4.3 Filing Confidential Material. Before filing confidential material or discussing or
27 referencing such material in court filings, the filing party shall confer with the designating party,

1 in accordance with Local Civil Rule 5(g)(3)(A), to determine whether the designating party will
2 remove the confidential designation, whether the document can be redacted, or whether a motion
3 to seal or stipulation and proposed order is warranted. During the meet and confer process, the
4 designating party must identify the basis for sealing the specific confidential information at issue,
5 and the filing party shall include this basis in its motion to seal, along with any objection to
6 sealing the information at issue. Local Civil Rule 5(g) sets forth the procedures that must be
7 followed and the standards that will be applied when a party seeks permission from the court to
8 file material under seal. A party who seeks to maintain the confidentiality of its information must
9 satisfy the requirements of Local Civil Rule 5(g)(3)(B), even if it is not the party filing the motion
10 to seal. Failure to satisfy this requirement will result in the motion to seal being denied, in
11 accordance with the strong presumption of public access to the Court's files.

12 5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

13 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection. Each party
14 or non-party that designates information or items for protection under this agreement must take
15 care to limit any such designation to specific material that qualifies under the appropriate
16 standards. The designating party must designate for protection only those parts of material,
17 documents, items, or oral or written communications that qualify, so that other portions of the
18 material, documents, items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not
19 swept unjustifiably within the ambit of this agreement.

20 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations that are
21 shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper purpose (e.g., to
22 unnecessarily encumber or delay the case development process or to impose unnecessary
23 expenses and burdens on other parties) expose the designating party to sanctions.

24 If it comes to a designating party's attention that information or items that it designated
25 for protection do not qualify for protection, the designating party must promptly notify all other
26 parties that it is withdrawing the mistaken designation.
27

1 5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in this
 2 agreement (see, *e.g.*, second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise stipulated or
 3 ordered, disclosure or discovery material that qualifies for protection under this agreement must
 4 be clearly so designated before or when the material is disclosed or produced.

5 (a) Information in documentary form: (*e.g.*, paper or electronic documents
 6 and deposition exhibits, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial
 7 proceedings), the designating party must affix the word “CONFIDENTIAL” to each page that
 8 contains confidential material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for
 9 protection, the producing party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (*e.g.*, by making
 10 appropriate markings in the margins).

11 (b) Testimony given in deposition or in other pretrial proceedings: the parties
 12 and any participating non-parties must identify on the record, during the deposition or other
 13 pretrial proceeding, all protected testimony, without prejudice to their right to so designate other
 14 testimony after reviewing the transcript. Any party or non-party may, within fifteen days after
 15 receiving the transcript of the deposition or other pretrial proceeding, designate portions of the
 16 transcript, or exhibits thereto, as confidential. If a party or non-party desires to protect
 17 confidential information at trial, the issue should be addressed during the pre-trial conference.

18 (c) Other tangible items: the producing party must affix in a prominent place
 19 on the exterior of the container or containers in which the information or item is stored the word
 20 “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information or item warrant protection,
 21 the producing party, to the extent practicable, shall identify the protected portion(s).

22 5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent failure to
 23 designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive the designating party’s
 24 right to secure protection under this agreement for such material. Upon timely correction of a
 25 designation, the receiving party must make reasonable efforts to ensure that the material is treated
 26 in accordance with the provisions of this agreement.

27 6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any party or non-party may challenge a designation of confidentiality at any time. Unless a prompt challenge to a designating party's confidentiality designation is necessary to avoid foreseeable, substantial unfairness, unnecessary economic burdens, or a significant disruption or delay of the litigation, a party does not waive its right to challenge a confidentiality designation by electing not to mount a challenge promptly after the original designation is disclosed.

6.2 Meet and Confer. The parties must make every attempt to resolve any dispute regarding confidential designations without court involvement. Any motion regarding confidential designations or for a protective order must include a certification, in the motion or in a declaration or affidavit, that the movant has engaged in a good faith meet and confer conference with other affected parties in an effort to resolve the dispute without court action. The certification must list the date, manner, and participants to the conference. A good faith effort to confer requires a face-to-face meeting or a telephone conference.

6.3 Judicial Intervention. If the parties cannot resolve a challenge without court intervention, the designating party may file and serve a motion to retain confidentiality under Local Civil Rule 7 (and in compliance with Local Civil Rule 5(g), if applicable). The burden of persuasion in any such motion shall be on the designating party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper purpose (*e.g.*, to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the challenging party to sanctions. All parties shall continue to maintain the material in question as confidential until the court rules on the challenge.

7. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED IN OTHER LITIGATION

If a party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this action as "CONFIDENTIAL," that party must:

(a) promptly notify the designating party in writing and include a copy of the subpoena or court order;

1 (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to
 2 issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena or order is
 3 subject to this agreement. Such notification shall include a copy of this agreement; and

4 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued
 5 by the designating party whose confidential material may be affected.

6 8. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

7 If a receiving party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed confidential
 8 material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this agreement, the receiving
 9 party must immediately (a) notify in writing the designating party of the unauthorized
 10 disclosures, (b) use its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the protected material,
 11 (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of
 12 this agreement, and (d) request that such person or persons execute the “Acknowledgment and
 13 Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

14 9. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE 15 PROTECTED MATERIAL

16 When a producing party gives notice to receiving parties that certain inadvertently
 17 produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the
 18 receiving parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This
 19 provision is not intended to modify whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery
 20 order or agreement that provides for production without prior privilege review. The parties agree
 21 to the entry of a non-waiver order under Fed. R. Evid. 502(d) as set forth herein.

22 10. NON TERMINATION AND RETURN OF DOCUMENTS

23 Within 60 days after the termination of this action, including all appeals, each receiving
 24 party must return all confidential material to the producing party, including all copies, extracts
 25 and summaries thereof. Alternatively, the parties may agree upon appropriate methods of
 26 destruction.
 27

1 Notwithstanding this provision, counsel are entitled to retain one archival copy of all
2 documents filed with the court, trial, deposition, and hearing transcripts, correspondence,
3 deposition and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert
4 work product, even if such materials contain confidential material.

5 The confidentiality obligations imposed by this agreement shall remain in effect until a
6 designating party agrees otherwise in writing or a court orders otherwise.

7 IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

8
9 DATED: November 2, 2022

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ORDER

PURSUANT TO STIPULATION, IT IS SO ORDERED

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to Fed. R. Evid. 502(d), the production of any documents in this proceeding shall not, for the purposes of this proceeding or any other federal or state proceeding, constitute a waiver by the producing party of any privilege applicable to those documents, including the attorney-client privilege, attorney work-product protection, or any other privilege or protection recognized by law.

DATED this 4th day of November, 2022.



RICARDO S. MARTINEZ
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE